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UNCLAS MAPUTO 000846

SIPDIS

STATE FOR DS/IP/AF, DS/IP/ITA, DS/IP/FPO, AF/EX, AF/S

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ASEC MZ](#)

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON STRIKING LOCAL GUARD FORCE MEMBERS

REF: A. (A) MAPUTO 00834

[1](#)B. (B) MAPUTO 00842

[1](#)1. SUMMARY: As reported in Ref A, on July 5, 2005, individual employees of the local guard force contracted through Wackenhut held a strike. The strike has continued on July 6 and RSO expects the strike to continue for the next several days. The number of roving bands of striking guards and laid-off workers was notably smaller than yesterday, with groups ranging from 5-20 individuals in each. We are not aware of any physical force being used today, unlike yesterday. All but one residence retained guard coverage. The U.S. office buildings and U.S.Embassy were significantly understaffed. Many of the guards on duty are on their second, third, or fourth straight shift. Meals were supplied to all guards working past their normal 12 hour shift. As stated in Ref B, an Emergency Action Committee (EAC) meeting was held this morning. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. On July 5, 2005, many members of the local guard force either did not report to or left their posts soon after the day shift began. This situation repeated itself on July 6, [1](#)2005. RSO received no reports of residential guards missing work last night. Today, all residences except for one had guard coverage. However, many of the residential guards have been working for two, three, and in one case, four 12 hour consecutive shifts. The RSO and ARSO touched base with all the guards and advised them to wear civilian clothes during the first half of the day when the roving bands of striking guards wandered the streets. One such band of strikers was encountered by the RSO and ARSO, who photographed these strikers. In addition, arrangements were made to deliver food to all the guards working more than one shift.

[1](#)3. The U.S. official buildings were considerably understaffed on July 6. The U.S.Embassy conducted business with only 2 guards versus the standard 13 guards. The front doors leading from the main street were closed and locked and all visitors with appointments and Americans in need of American Citizen Services were allowed access via a side exit normally used only for mission employees. The standard number of police remain on duty at the Embassy, the EMR, PA, and U.S.AID; however, their presence has been ineffective in stopping the striking workers or barring unauthorized access to facilities. The Peace Corps and Public Affairs offices each had 2 guards versus the standard 3 each, the GSO warehouse had the regular number of 3 guards, the U.S.AID Miramar housing compound had 2 guards versus the standard 5 guards, and U.S.AID had 6 guards versus the standard 12 guards until one left to join the strikers. The Peace Corps and Public Affairs offices were instructed to close and lock their gates briefly this morning while the roving bands of strikers roamed the streets in search of guards whom they could coerce to join their cause.

[1](#)4. The senior management of the guard company was contacted by the Ministry of Labor with a request to meet the guard union representatives in front of an official arbitrator. The guard company executives have agreed if all the guards return to their posts and resume work. The guard union's response as of the afternoon of July 6 was negative. The guards will continue to strike. The guard company subcontracted approximately 30 guards who have been receiving training and will start to relieve regular guards on July 7. The guard company expects to subcontract and train more guards by Friday, July 8. Additional executive officers of the guard company are expected to fly into Maputo on July 7 and meet with the Minister of Labor in order to resolve this situation.

[1](#)5. The RSO will send another message to all direct hire Americans today prior to COB explaining the current situation and offering security advice. If the U.S.Embassy is severely understaffed tomorrow, July 7, the EAC will consider closing the Embassy for regular business. The guards on duty are extremely tired from working numerous shifts, extremely overtaxed by attempting to man numerous posts. This increases the risk to the Embassy and the mission personnel's safety.  
Dudley